

Hello, My name is Alex Kashevaroff. I am a professional musician and independent recording artist. I sing and play acoustic 12 string guitar as a solo performer, throughout the south Florida area.

I have written songs for hit albums by Journey and Pat Travers, and have recorded with Pablo Cruise, Van Morrison, New Riders and others. I have 4 CD's of my original songs in current release, and am now recording a 5th CD. I perform very often throughout my area, and am expanding into doing festivals and concerts in other areas now.

I got a big break in 1974 when KSAN in San Francisco hosted a contest for unsigned bands and my band won it. That kind of exposure with the public led to our first release of a single, which did well regionally. I have had my songs played on a few radio stations in California (where I'm from originally). Since moving to Florida last year, I have been interviewed and played twice on the Miami PBS station, for a program on Folk music. This is a great program, and has a lot of loyal listeners in the community, but is always on the chopping block every time that fundraising becomes an issue. Over the years, I have seen many of these avenues of potential exposure dry up as radio has become more corporate, lean and mean. When I talk to managers at radio stations, they generally say that their programming comes from the corporate office, and they have no authority to play anything but what is given them by their boss. Local artists, and locally programmed shows are very rare, and getting rarer. I myself am appalled at the tripe that passes for music on corporate radio. I search for artists on the internet who have talent, and frequently find them, so there is not a lack of talent out there, only a lack of vision and foresight, and a lack of concern for building community.

Let's face it, 'market forces theory' fails in every regard. Reliance on this formula for greed only benefits the most greedy and powerful. Look at today's corporate choke hold on our sacred public airwaves. There is very little left of community access now, on radio and tv. The issue these days at radio and tv stations is always that local programming doesn't bring in the immediate revenue. This kind of narrow and short sighted view of the bottom line will continue to feed on itself as long as the decision making is strictly in corporate hands that are not concerned in the slightest with building and expanding community, that is, enriching the lives of those who are listening and/or watching. In my opinion, a definition of local programming that is truly independent of this market force requirement, and a strict requirement of a quota of certain hours available to the community is a must for the situation to change at all.

I think the FCC should define local programming as that that is both locally originated and locally produced. I also think that the radio stations should make their production facilities available for a certain amount of hours, for people who submit a responsible prospectus of their idea and are approved by a committee of community representatives and local radio station management. I think this would result in a win win situation of the best and most tasteful programming for the community.

We, as people of the community deserve more than just bare bones news and public affairs. This same bare bones, meat and potatoes, english and math skills only in our schools is creating a crisis in our communities. It is a crisis of identity, or more correctly, a crisis of a lack of identity in people who grow up without culture in our society. Robbed of culture, and given consumerism as a replacement, people grow up disconnected from

society, unable to derive joy from their empty purchases. They become antisocial and lose hope. This community, and all communities, need a balance of culture and the arts, like local music and dance programs, programs about various cultures, in different languages, local relevant news, (and I include in this international issues that affect us at the local level, especially news that frequently goes unreported by corporate media), sports events, and my favorite would be a program that interviews local artists of all kinds, and plays their music or their video, or shows their art. I hosted such a show on a small station in California, and it was very well received by the community.

Radio stations should definitely be evaluated each year, for their participation in providing local programming. Those who do not participate should have their licenses revoked, as these are the PUBLIC airwaves. As for specific events and counting of them, I think I have made that point above already.

My feeling on payola is that is very widespread, evidenced by my experience in trying to get played on radio since deregulation. My suggestion to the FCC is to re-regulate radio and tv, and reinstitute a reasonable cap on ownership of radio and tv stations. I feel that this would relocalize both radio and tv. Many of the people I talk to at my shows no longer listen to radio, or watch tv if they can avoid it. The level of violence and hatred voiced or shown turns them off, and they have chosen to look elsewhere for entertainment.

I have no illusion that payola will ever stop entirely, but it is apparent to me when I hear talentless crap on radio, that payola was most likely involved in the decision to air it. I resent it, but as long as 'market forces' thinking prevails, we will have this sorry situation. To reiterate, the radio and tv airwaves are SACRED and owned by the PEOPLE of this country. Each station is only LICENSED to provide each community with service TO THAT COMMUNITY. The current deregulated state of affairs encourages conglomeration and central control of many stations, at the painful expense of communities across this nation. If the FCC places reasonable rules and restrictions on ownership and programming, then we can begin to see a positive change in our situation at the local, and the national level.

Voicetracking is a deceptive practice, and should be treated as such. What happens when you lie in court? Well, theoretically, you go to jail, or at least have something bad happen to you. Why are there no rules in the FCC to address this and other concerns? Who is sleeping on the job here? Let's fire him, and get on with making this country and our airwaves a better place.

National playlists are made by powerful special interests within the broadcast and recording industry. They are a mirror of the corporate will. They have a devastating effect on local artists and their connection to potential and actual local fans. If it weren't for the internet, I would have very little, if any connection with my local community. But as it is, I do have a website, where people can see where I perform, see my songlist and history, and hear my songs. I am also selling my CD's at CDBaby, and Apple iTunes, among others. I think radio stations, as a requirement for license renewal, be required to set aside half of their airtime to local programming. This would begin to serve the community that the radio station is meant to serve, and begin to build community within that geographical circle covered by that station. Think about it, today's mall has no sense of

community. There are no bulletin boards or local flyers allowed. Corporate control of malls, and of airwaves, is just not a good idea, as some mid level manager in Delaware has absolutely no interest in local events in South Florida, only an interest in keeping his job, which means feeding the market forces bottom line. Now I'm not against profit, I'm an entrepreneur myself, but this kind of disconnected decision making wreaks havoc on my community, and I am not happy about it. My contention is that, over time, local programming can and will show a profit, not only for the radio station, but for the community it serves as a whole as well. We need a mandate to begin this community rebuilding process, and for this, we look to you at the FCC.

I once hosted a radio program for a small LPFM station in Berkeley, California. It was a hit show in the community, and benefitted a lot of artists in the community. LPFM stations are a definite step in the right direction towards reclaiming our local control of airwaves, and rebuilding real community for purposes other than strictly profit. I would like to see a lot more LPFM licenses, especially in more populated areas. I would tend to listen to these, well above the normal corporate drivel. I think that LPFM stations could benefit not only the music community, but the whole community, as other artists, personalities, and community concerns can be heard again, and feel a part of life here in the community.

I would like to thank the FCC, and those that put this website together, for making this public proceeding possible. It shows a concern and I appreciate that concern. I hope my comments are helpful to the process. I can be reached if further questions, at kashalex@hotmail.com